

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0711

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PORS, IEIR, MARR, ECON, EFIN, MP, SE, FR
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW -- JUNE 23, 1978- SUMMARY

REF: PORT LOUIS 0685 (DTG 160851Z JUN 78)
PORT LOUIS A-52. JUNE 23, 1978

1. THIS WEEK IT WAS THE TURN OF THE GOVERNMENT SIDE
TO STAGE A NOISYWALKOUT FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
WHICH THEY DID TO PROTEST A RULING BY THEIR OWN
DEPUTY SPEAKER, WHO SEEMED TO TAKE THE SIDE OF A
MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) DEPUTY WHO HAD
ALLEGEDLY INSULTED THE LABOR MINISTER. THE PRESS
REPORTED THAT PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM IS STILL
NEGOTIATING WITH DISSIDENT MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY
TO OBTAIN THEIR SUPPORT FOR ALL ASPECTS OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET. HE ALSO IS FACED WITH
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SOME DEFECTIONS FROM AMONG MEMBERS OF TH COALITION
PARTNER, THE MAURITIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PMSD).

2. THE MMM'S PAUL BERENGER, HIS PARTY'S SPOKESMAN
ON ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MATTERS, WAS THE OPPOSITION'S
PRINCIPAL SPEAKER AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET
PROPOSALS IN THE ASSEMBLY. THE THRUST OF THIS ATTACK

WAS THAT THE BUDGET IS NOT "SOCIALIST" IN THAT IT CONTAINS NO PROPOSALS FOR DISMANTLING THE ESSENTIALLY CAPITALIST ECONOMIC STRUCTURES OF MAURITIUS. HE CALLED FOR NATIONALIZATION OF KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS AND LESS "FAVORITISM" FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE ECONOMY IS IN MUCH WORSE SHAPE THAN ADMITTED BY FINANCE MINISTER RINGADOO.

3. RENE'S INSTALLATION OF A SINGLE PARTY SYSTEM IN THE SEYCHELLES HAS CAUSED A GREAT DEAL OF COMMENT HERE. THE ANTI-MMM PRESS AND PMSD LEADER GAETAN DUVAL HAVE COMMENTED THAT IF THE MMM CAME TO POWER HERE IT WOULD FOLLOW A SIMILAR COURSE. BERENGER DENIED THIS, SAYING THAT THE MMM BELIEVES IN ACHIEVING POWER THROUGH ELECTIONS AND SUPPORTS A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM. IN AN INTERVIEW DUVAL ADVOCATED A MUTUAL SECURITY PACT WITH FRANCE WHICH WOULD PERMIT FRANCE TO INTERVENE TO PUT DOWN A FOREIGN SUPPORTED COUP HERE.

HE IMPLIED THE MMM WAS PLANNING SUCH AN ATTEMPT. DUVAL ALSO CALLED FOR NEW GENERAL ELECTIONS, IN WHICH HE THINKS THE MMM COULD BE BEATEN BADLY. THE MMM IN TURN HAS CHARGED THAT THE PMSD IS TRYING TO DRAG THE LABOR PARTY TO THE RIGHT AND TO INSTITUTE A CAMPAIGN OF OUTRIGHT REPRESSION AGAINST THE MMM. CONFIDENTIAL

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